



Colonial Life in Williamsburg

Do you ever wonder what it would have been like to live in Williamsburg during colonial times? Was colonial life different than life in the U.S. today? Using the chart below and the photo journal, compare life in colonial Williamsburg with life today.

Reading	Colonial Times	Today
Town Description		
Population		
Currency (Money)		
Attire (Dress)		
Homes		
Food/Drink		
Education		
Behavior of Children		

Reading	Colonial Times	Today
Town Description	wide streets, theatre, College of William and Mary, Capitol building, elegant shops, gardens, farms, thriving, prosperous, large public buildings	looks very much the same way it did in colonial times because it has been restored as a historical site
Population	2,000 - half were white settlers from England, Scotland and Ireland while the other half were African Americans, a few were gentry, a large number were middle class, the remaining were poor	13,000 – 75% are white and 25% are African American or Hispanic, wealthy, middle class and poor
Currency (Money)	coins made in other countries, mostly Spanish silver, English value system of pence, shillings and pounds, tobacco certificates, trade/barter	paper bills, coins, credit cards, loans, checks, trade
Attire (Dress)	babies – long gowns, shifts and shirts; boys – breeches, shirts, waistcoats, three-cornered hat, cravats, stockings and shoes; girls – shift, caps, long stockings, ribbon garters, stays, hoops, petticoat, pocket, outer petticoat, frock, apron	boys – pants, jeans, shorts, shirts, hats, shoes girls – pants, shirts, shorts, dresses, skirts, jeans, hats, shoes
Homes	made of wood or brick, oiled paper or glass windows, candles for light, fireplace for warmth and cooking, wells for water, mills for grinding, mansions	restored to colonial appearance

Food/Drink	baked ham, stewed beef, turkey, chicken, fish, apples, peaches, peas, beans, turnips, lettuce, onions, carrots, potatoes, squash, bread, pudding, tea, milk, coffee, wine, apple cider, homemade beer	similar but have added fast food like cheeseburgers, pizza, soda
Education	boys – read, write, cipher, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, history, geography, went to college to become lawyers, doctors, or clergymen; girls – read, write, cipher	boys and girls have equal rights to education, primary schools, middle schools, high schools and colleges/universities
Behavior of Children	expected to obey the “dos” and don’ts” laid down by the parents or society; girls – argued, scratched and pulled hair; boys – snatched wigs, broke windows and hurled brickbats at each other	still expected to obey parents and society; girls and boys still get in arguments and cause trouble sometimes